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Declassified Case: NW# 78134 Date:
08-25-2025

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Russian President Putin (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Peter Afanassenko
Notetakers: Todd Whatley, Diana Schmidt,
and Jo-Ann Burdian

DATE, TIME April 23, 2007, 7:42 - 7:52 a.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello? Hey, Vladimir. (U)

President Putin: Yes, hello, George. (U)

The President: How are you doing, Vladimir? (U)

President Putin: It is a pleasure to hear your voice. (U)

The President: Thank you for calling. (U)

President Putin: Thank you for making time to speak with me.
(U)

The President: Anytime. (U)

President Putin: Thank you, sir. From the outset, I want to
send your Defense Secretary's best regards. I just finished
talking to him. (U)

The President: Oh, good. (U)

President Putin: He asked me to tell you he transferred all the
messages to me. He did all you asked him to do. He is now
consulting with our military. (U)

The President: Good. (U)

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Classified by: V. Phillip Lago
Reason: 1.4(d)
Declassify on: 4/27/17

(President Putin: I don't know what they are talking about, because you and the American military know our concerns, but I am calling on a different subject. We are launching a new national library and our experts met with the leadership of the Library of Congress in Washington. The director of the Library of Congress knew one of our outstanding intellectuals, Likhachev, who is unfortunately no longer with us. They were personal friends. The director of the Library of Congress put out an initiative to organize joint work on some of the aspects of our history. We believe it is a good initiative. In the future maybe, we could work on making not a bilateral, but a multilateral project of establishing a global digital library. This fits well into our cooperation in humanitarian areas, especially against the background of the bicentennial of U.S.-Russian relations. I know what great attention Laura is devoting to libraries in the United States. My wife has also been instrumental in developing that issue in Russia. This could be a good bilateral project. If you share my plan, I could say this publicly. I'll be talking to the Federal Assembly in the near future. I can say that we can provide political support for this kind of project. That is pretty much all I wanted to say. (S)

(The President: I think it is a great idea. Feel free to say anything you want on the subject. I think we need to put together a group to make sure we follow thorough. This guy Billington at the Library of Congress is very enthusiastic. He is a good guy and would be the right guy to be part of a team to make sure this thing moves forward. (S)

President Putin: This was his idea, by the way. (S)

The President: Well, we'll pursue it. Let me ask you one question. What is your view on the Serbia-Kosovo issue? Where do you think we are on the issue? (S)

President Putin: I know there was a commission going there to see how the previous resolutions were being carried out. I don't know if they have completed their mission, but we need to analyze the results. (S)

The President: Okay. How is everything else going? (U)

(President Putin: Everything is just okay. I hope our ministers are doing their jobs. They had an idea for a good mechanism for relations with individual countries. When defense and foreign ministers meet at the same time, this type of consultation is very useful. In the future, we should think of working in this manner. On the whole, we are preparing to meet you in Germany for the G-8. (S)

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The President: Good. I am looking forward to it. We have a lot of action here at home. It seems like half the world is running for president so, as you can imagine, we have a lot of opinions. It is interesting to watch everyone position themselves. Of course, the world looks much easier until you end up actually responsible. My hope is to leave the U.S.-Russian relationship in a place so that our successors can work on issues they agree on and learn to disagree amicably. You and I have a responsibility to continue our good relationship. We have to teach others how to proceed in the 21st Century. (S)

President Putin: I agree with you 100 percent. As far as presidential elections, they are the same all over the world. We have the same picture here. I think we will ensure continuity in our interstate relations, too. Thank you very much for finding time today. Please give my best to Laura. (S)

The President: Thank you very much. My best to Lyudmila, too.
(U)

President Putin: Okay. (U)

The President: Bye-bye. (U)

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-- End of Conversation --